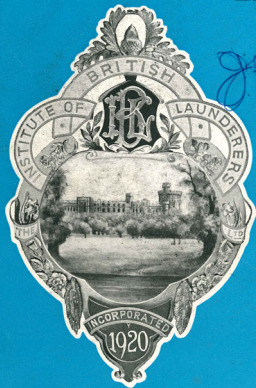


THE STORY OF THE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH LAUNDERERS



*J.A. Alcock
Eastbourne
3 Nov/62*

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INSTITUTE'S 75 YEARS
AS A TRADE ASSOCIATION AND OF THE INDUSTRY
IT SERVES

The Story of the Institute of British Launderers

Published by

THE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH LAUNDERERS LTD

16-17, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2

Director: E. W. Swetman, F.C.C.S.

The Story of the Institute of British Landowners

Published by
THE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH LANDOWNERS LTD
100, 101, Lancaster Gate, London, W.2

Made and Printed in Great Britain by C. Tinkling & Co. Ltd.,
Liverpool, London and Prescott

CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. INTRODUCTION	7
II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTE	9
III. TRADE PROTECTION—THE EARLY YEARS	15
IV. TRADE PROTECTION—FROM WAR TO WAR—AND BEYOND	21
V. EXPANDING INTERESTS	26
VI. RECENT VICTORIES	36

CONTENTS

Page	Chapter
7	I. Introduction
9	II. Development of the Institute
13	III. Trade Relations—The Early Years
21	IV. Trade Relations—From War to War—and Beyond
26	V. Expansion Activities
30	VI. Recent Activities

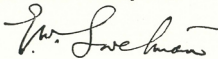
FOREWORD

The occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Birthday of the Institute of British Launderers in February 1961 brought the realisation that there was no record of its establishment and subsequent development. If such a record were ever to be produced, it was clearly desirable that it should be done whilst documents could still be supplemented by personal memories. The present publication is the outcome of this realisation.

The task proved more difficult than was at first anticipated, since a formal history demanded more research than time allowed and was unlikely to be acceptable for general reading. It is, however, hoped that the "story" which follows will both interest members and provide a permanent record of the more important events in the history of the Institute. Since the story clearly reveals the advantage to an industry of having a strong organisation to safeguard its interests, it may also appeal to those concerned with other trade associations.

By any standards the record of achievement is a proud one. Undoubtedly, the thanks of the present generation of launderers are due to all members of the Industry who served on the Councils and Committees of the Institute and the Associations from which it sprang, and particularly to those who have held high office, some of whom are named at the end of the booklet. We should also remember the staff who in past years served the Institute, led for some 30 years until 1943 by Mr. J. J. Stark and following him, until 1954, by Mr. D. K. Rollit, O.B.E.

I would like to express my thanks to the members of the present staff who helped to produce this booklet, particularly Miss V. M. F. Stubington who carried out much of the necessary research work and original writing. May I also express my appreciation for being allowed to draw on the long experience in the industry and in Institute affairs of Mr. T. D. Reeve, the Honorary Treasurer and Past President of the Institute. His memory of people and events helped us to produce a more accurate story than would otherwise have been possible.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'J. J. Stark', with a horizontal line underneath.

Director and General Secretary.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Institute of British Launderers, today a nation-wide organisation, began in 1886 on a modest, localised and informal scale, and its remarkable expansion during the past 75 years is symptomatic of an equally remarkable development in the industry which it represents. This story is intended to present as clear a picture as possible of those 75 years, although the records of the earlier years are imperfect, some having been lost, and some apparently non-existent. Where written records have failed, the living memories of those who were there have aided us, and it is hoped that the remaining gaps are not very serious.

The background of the Institute is, of course, the industry itself, which is as ancient as textiles are. In this country the first attempt at organisations was in the Middle Ages, in the time of the Medieval Guilds. In 1297 the Fullers of Lincoln formed a Guild for purpose of self protection. They passed a resolution that none of their members should "work in a trough" meaning tread cloth underfoot, a primitive method of laundering which was used by the Romans. The Guild provided among other things a total disability insurance of 3s. a year for three years, and payments to dependants in case of death.

With the passing of the Guilds, however, the laundry industry fades from view once more. The Renaissance period was not really noted for devotion to hygiene. Even the word "laundry" is of comparatively recent origin. The root appears to have been the French word "lavandier" and the first mention of anything resembling laundry or laundress in the English language would seem to be Chaucer's use of the word Lavinder, by which he meant a washer of linen.

An English dictionary of 200 years ago gives the words laundress and lavinder both as meaning washerwomen, which would seem to bear out the theory.

It is interesting to speculate on how the term "laundress" could have evolved from Lavandier or lavindress. In Old English the letters U and V were easily confused, indeed, the letter V for a long time did

duty as both, and a scholar reading lauin instead of lavin, and considering the "i" unnecessary, as he might well do in an age when spelling was a matter of taste, might write laundress instead of lavin-dress.

The word "laundress" was in use in Shakespeare's day, for he uses it in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. The Merry Wives plan to trick Sir John Falstaff into cramming himself into a washing basket to escape an imaginary angry husband, and they instruct their serving men to carry the basket among "the laundresses of Datchet Mead" and empty it into the muddy ditch. It is this event which is commemorated in the design of the President's Badge of the Institute, which shows Datchets Mead, with the river running at the bottom of the picture, and Windsor Castle in the background (*see cover*).

However, the industry which gave rise to all this learned speculation was itself small and diffuse until an era of growth arrived in the nineteenth century, aided by the technical developments of that time. As far as can be traced, the first steam laundry in this country was opened by a firm of Crystal Palace engineers, Thomas Bradford, who set it up in 1866. Another engineering firm noted in the laundry world, was J. J. Lane Limited, who presented the trade with a commercial washing machine of remarkably modern appearance in 1885, almost on the eve of the Institute's foundation.

That foundation took place the following year, in February, 1886.



The late J. J. Stark, General Secretary for nearly thirty years.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTITUTE

In February 1886, the National Laundry Association was formed.

At this distance of time, the details of that founding are hard to discern. Towards the end of 1885 Mr. Charles Cordingley of the *Laundry News*, the man who later organised the first Laundry Machinery Exhibition, called on Mr. Simon of Pier House Laundry, and asked for his help in forming a Laundry Association. Mr. Simon, the grandfather of the present Mr. C. Simon of Pier House Laundry agreed and Mr. Cordingley became the first secretary of the Association when it

was formed in 1886. The first chairman was Mr. Alfred Dowling, but in the first year of its existence the Association had no president. This post was created in the second year and was filled initially by Major William Paul. Some other early supporters of the movement included Mr. King of Blue House Laundry, Mr. Keith of the Scottish Laundry and Mr. A. R. Frost of Bon Ton Laundry.

The beginnings were, perforce, small and localised. There was little or no instinct for unity in the industry. Launderers were inclined to regard competitors as rivals, to be outdone and outwitted, instead of as companions and co-operators.

However, the laundry trade was growing. The heavy soap duty which had been in force from 1712 to 1852 had rendered one of the principal laundry requisites so extremely expensive that the industry had been hamstrung, but following the removal of the Duty, fashions swung towards styles which involved complicated laundering, towards muslins and white suits and chintz covers for beds and drawing room furniture. With the growth of the business it was a natural development that it should want to become more organised, have its interests considered when legislation affecting it was enacted, and generally make itself felt. But this opinion was not endorsed by all the launderers at once.

In 1897 the name of the organisation was changed. It had evidently established its character by then as protective, for the new name was registered as the National Laundry Trade Protection Association Limited and it had its headquarters in Gracechurch Street.

The N.L.T.P.A. existed for six years, and then in 1903 changed its name again to the Launderers' Association Limited. It was mainly intended for London members but provincial launderers seem to have been made welcome when they presented themselves, and by 1920, about one third of the total membership of 850 were provincial launderers. During the lifetime of the Launderers' Association Limited hopes were entertained of making the organisation national. These hopes were not realised immediately, but the idea was there.

Not long after the formation of the National Laundry Association, other organisations began to make themselves heard in the industry. There was the Acton Launderers' Association, which was however more of a social than a professional body; there was the Western District Laundry Association, and there was the United Kingdom Laundry Proprietors' Protection Society. In 1890 The West of Scotland Laundry Association came into existence, with six member

firms which agreed to have a fixed price list for family laundry, and a £50 fine for breach of the agreement. This association, which was finally dissolved in 1919, was one of several which operated in Scotland during the early part of the twentieth century. There was an East of Scotland Laundry Association, for example, and also a Scottish Laundry Association.

In 1894 the geographical gap between Scotland and London was partly bridged by the establishment of the Northern Counties Laundry Association. A Southport laundryman, Mr. Robert Benson, influenced some of his fellows in the north in this project. Northern laundries were circularised to find their reactions and a meeting of interested people was held on 5th June at the Memorial Hall, Albert Square, Manchester. The result was an agreement to form the Association, which expanded rapidly after its foundation, and soon produced branches and offshoots.

In August 1894 the National Launderers' Association first suggested that it and the Northern Counties Laundry Association should become affiliated. This offer was politely refused, but the N.C.L.A. presently took to electing as Honorary Members the presidents and secretaries of the N.L.A. and the West of Scotland Association, a sign that they were far from averse to co-operation in some degree.

The Birmingham Association was formed about 1897 and the North Eastern Association started at the Queens Hotel, Stockton-on-Tees in 1900 with between 50 and 60 members. In 1907 it was sub-divided into the Yorkshire Launderers' Association and the Northumberland and Durham Launderers' and Dyers' Association. When in 1901 many of the movements became federated, it did not join with them, and remained outside the Federation until 1920.

This tendency towards federation was apparent well before the end of the nineteenth century, but the jealousies which individual laundrerers felt among themselves existed in a similar way between their associations, and this delayed the process. However, there was a joint effort by a number of the associations in 1899, who held a conference about the fixing of minimum prices. There were no far-reaching results of this conference, but it was memorable as being one of the first examples of united action, and a desire was expressed for an annual repetition of the conference.

Partly as a result of this, correspondence on an unofficial level began between Mr. King Warhurst of N.L.T.P.A. and Mr. Robert Benson of the N.C.L.A. and this culminated in the drafting of a scheme of federa-

tion. In September 1900 there was a meeting with representatives from N.L.T.P.A., the N.C.L.A., and its offshoot at Manchester. While the West of Scotland and the Irish Associations were not represented, they had expressed approval. Mr. H. Trenchard took the Chair, and it was decided that the laundry associations should federate for "the purpose of dealing with any matter of principle affecting the trade as a whole, whether legislative or otherwise".

In 1901 the Federation of Laundry Associations commenced operations. This Federation was the first major step made towards the welding together of the various organisations into the coherent whole which is the Institute today.

It is evident that by 1901 the old-time suspicion between individuals and groups was breaking down. All faced common problems calling for a united front and many were beginning to realise it. Some of the problems, great and small, have a familiar ring. At an N.C.L.A. (Manchester) meeting in October 1901, and also the following meeting on 12th November, Fire Insurance and liability for customers' goods in trust were discussed with lively interest, and the question of fixing minimum prices produced a paper by Mr. Brown of Bolton, on "The Evils of Competition, Their Cause and Cure", in which he discussed questions of price cutting. By fixing prices, he said, laundrymen would be prevented from trying to undersell each other and would have to compete by improving the quality of their work.

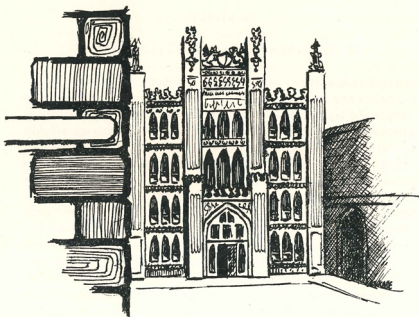
The smaller trials of life in the laundry seem to have been the same then as they are today. At another N.C.L.A. (Manchester) meeting in December 1901, Mr. Sheldon of that organisation gave a paper entitled "Humours of the Laundry Business" in which he talked with amusement of—literally—awkward customers, such as the ones who always insisted that anything lost was brand new, and others who were prone to leaving studs, links and even money in their clothes, not to mention the thrifty souls who, having recommended their friends to their laundry, felt that they were entitled to a commission.

The Federation lived, flourished and expanded steadily from 1901 to 1920.

During 1918 and 1919 a desire for re-organisation and further unification arose and in 1920 the movement's basis was altered from that of federated associations to individual membership, and the organisation was re-named the National Federation of Launderers Ltd., the local associations being re-formed into Federation sections. The new Federation also grew and thrived. It moved into No. 17,

Lancaster Gate in 1923, added No. 16 some years later, and changed its name again in the 1930's to the Institution of British Launderers Limited. The change was aimed at drawing attention to the nature of the organisation's work, which had ceased long before to be purely protective, and had expanded to embrace schemes for furthering the training of launderers, both technically and managerially, and research into the technical aspects of the industry.

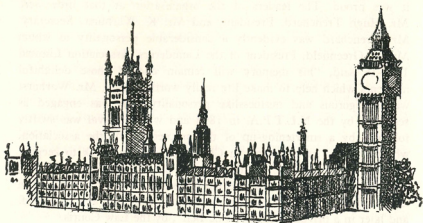
This change coincided with the organisation's Golden Jubilee. At the Nineteenth Annual Laundry Congress, April 27-May 1st, 1936, Golden Jubilee Year, held at the Dorchester Hotel and attended by H.R.H. the Duke of Kent, an address was given by Mr. Herbert N. Casson, Editor and owner of the Efficiency Magazine, which captured the confident atmosphere of the time. The main theme of his speech was a plea to the industry to keep abreast of the times, to keep young, and to enjoy it. He urged his hearers to have faith in the future which, he said, would be better than the past in spite of all they read



*The Guildhall, London,
scene of the Institute's 75th anniversary banquet.*

in the papers. The papers, of course, were not entirely wrong since the industry suffered much from the war years which followed but the Golden Jubilee reflected the optimism and joviality of that time.

Certainly the Institution continued to flourish and expand, despite the intervention of the Second World War. It was this expansion, with the development of the Production Department and the educational schemes, that resulted in another change of title in 1955, when the organisation adopted its present name of the Institute of British Launderers.



Houses of Parliament.

CHAPTER III

TRADE PROTECTION—THE EARLY YEARS

The need of the laundry industry to fight for consideration when new laws were being formulated and old ones invoked, was recognised by all the associations which made up the Federation, and was responsible for the existence of many of them. The Birmingham Association, for example, had begun because a General Powers Bill promoted by the Corporation of Birmingham had roused the ire of local launderers, who banded together to resist it. There was little disagreement on the question of what the Federation was for, and almost the first thing the federated associations did, trying their strength for the first time as a unity, was to take action over a proposed Factory and Workshops Act Amendment which threatened to impose unpopular controls. Federation members spent a great deal of time in the lobby of the House of Commons, interviewing Members, and on three occasions saw the Home Secretary. The M.P.'s were impressed by the arguments, and as the time of the House for discussing the Bill was limited, the clauses affecting laundries were dropped.

Round one to the Federation. It was not the last round in that particular struggle, but it was the Federation's initial effort of which

it was proud. The leaders of the organisation at that time were Mr. Hugh Trenchard, President, and Mr. K. Warhurst, Secretary. Mr. Trenchard was evidently a considerable personality of whom Mr. H. Greenfield, President of the Launderers' Association Limited 1913-16 said, "his memory will remain one of those delightful incidents which help to make life really worth living". Mr. Warhurst was a vigorous and businesslike personality who was engaged as secretary by the N.L.T.P.A. in 1898 and whose arrival was swiftly followed by a smartening-up of the proceedings of the association, which acquired new quarters in Chancery Lane and took to keeping Minutes of its meetings. Until this time there had been no Minutes, and the meetings which had remained extremely informal had been held at first in a public room of a public house in Grays Inn Road, and later in a private room in "The Bell", by the Law Courts.

The next task to which the Federation turned its hand was the liquidation of another "List of Customers" clause, like the one which had so infuriated the Birmingham launderers. On the principle that constructive as against destructive opposition is more effective, the Federation set out to draft a suitable substitute clause, which the House of Lords Police and Sanitary Committee finally accepted as standard.

In 1902 Mr. Matthew Coats became Secretary of the Federation, succeeding Mr. Warhurst, and hardly was he in office before the Factory Act question re-appeared.

It was revived by the Fabian Society, which was pressing for tighter legal controls on laundries, and it was becoming plain that the industry would have to come to terms with the legislators eventually. If new legislation were inevitable, however, at least the industry could try to see that it took place under its own auspices. When Lord Lytton in 1902 introduced a private bill in the House of Lords, which suggested modifications to the existing law, the Federation stepped in and it was settled that one of its members, Mr. H. J. Tennant, would take action on the Bill if it reached the Commons. At this time the attitude of the Fabian Society was causing a considerable amount of consternation in the industry and a tract which it issued, called "Life in the Laundry" was most critical of the trade. The Federation was concerned enough to produce an addendum to the tract which the Fabian Society agreed to distribute bound with it, and which gave a much fairer picture of the situation.

In 1904 the St. Pancras Borough Council, acting doubtless with the

best intentions, tried to persuade the Home Secretary to prohibit the sorting or marking of clothes until they had been washed or boiled in strong soap and water, a process which was not only quite unnecessary but would have involved the preliminary washing of every bundle's contents separately, before they even started on their journey through the laundry. The idea was quite impractical but seemed plausible to the uninitiated at first hearing, and the Federation contacted the Home Secretary immediately, in some anxiety. To everyone's relief, the unrealistic suggestion was successfully quashed.

In March, 1904, the North Eastern Launderers' and Dyers' Association was confronted by an effort on the part of the Bradford Sewage Committee to charge laundries 2½d. per 1,000 gallons for the treatment of the effluent released into the drains. This type of case was to prove a perennial, like the Factories Acts and the List of Customers clause. The Federation backed up the Bradford Launderers in their contention that their effluent was domestic rather than industrial in character, and Mr. Alfred Hutchison, solicitor, took charge of the case for the laundries.

A fund was opened to meet the biggest challenge the Federation had ever faced. Bradford Corporation summoned the Yorkshire laundries, and the Stipendiary Magistrate heard the case with the Federation handling the defence.

The verdict was a triumph for the Federation. It ran:—

"... that the defendants' premises and the processes carried on by them are not a manufactory, nor a work within the meaning of section, the refuse from the defendants' premises does not interfere with the treatment or utilisation of the sewage of the city, that the defendants' refuse is ordinary domestic refuse".

An appeal on the part of Bradford Corporation was defeated with equal success and the Federation was victorious, the case having cost £273 4s. 7d., which their fund more than covered.

In 1905, a Factory Bill from within the industry was placed before Parliament, by Mr. Cameron Corbett. Its objects were to distribute working hours more evenly over the week and end the system of working up to 17 hours on one or more days, and to establish a fixed hour in the morning before which work might not start and a fixed hour at night after which it might not go on. It also desired to bring religious and charitable institution laundries under the Factory Act.

Mr. Tennant produced a Private Bill that year as well, which contained items from the unsuccessful Bill by Lord Lytton. Neither

Mr. Corbett nor Mr. Tennant managed to get their Bills through, but their efforts were doing something towards the education of private opinion.

1905 was a busy year. It yielded another effluent case, this time concerning an Urban District Council, which told local launderers that they would have to run their effluent through settling tanks before letting it into the sewer. The Federation still glowing with its triumph over Bradford Corporation, told those launderers concerned to turn their effluent into the sewer as before, without recourse to settling tanks, and let the Urban Council take what action it chose.

It did not choose to take any action.

The Federation did not always win its legal battles outright initially. Most of its cases were in the nature of skirmishes in the course of much larger campaigns. Mr. Corbett determinedly re-introduced his Bill in 1906 and again in 1907, still without success. The Federation, equally persistent, but better-starred, opposed four more attempts to force launderers to supply the authorities with lists of customers who had infectious diseases in their households and got the offending clauses removed from the bills in each case. The four areas involved were Bacup, Huddersfield, Bury Port and Pontefract.

This success, and one later in the same year, against a List of Customers clause in an L.C.C. General Powers Bill, was followed at length by a measure of success in the matter of the Factory Act. Earl Beauchamp, acting for the Government, produced a Factory & Workshops Bill in 1907 which became law, and a deputation from the Federation to the Home Secretary won the admission of several clauses into the Bill. These stipulated (a) the "year" in the Factory Act was to be defined as a calendar year, i.e. 1st January-31st December, not any 12 months; (b) 60 single hours of overtime per calendar year without any extra mealtime, instead of 30 periods of two hours including half an hour for meals; (c) a special exception for London, allowing the working hours to be from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.; (d) the substitution of another day for Saturday as the weekly half holiday; (e) sets of departments need not be in separate rooms as required in other industries, but the names of those in each set were to be posted up for the inspector to see; (f) there was to be no work after 9 p.m. in any laundry.

In 1908 was first mentioned a matter which was to gain in importance later, that of Receiving Shops and their rating, and in 1909 their uncertain position was clarified by a statement in a letter from the Board of Inland Revenue. According to this, where a substantial

portion of the premises was used exclusively for the purpose of receiving goods to be dyed or cleaned, and where there was at least some exposure for sale, in the front and on the ground or basement storey of the building, then the Board would not object if the District Commissioners of Taxes decided to charge the premises at the shop rate of duty.

Another effluent case, this one in Huddersfield, claimed the Federation's attention the following year. Huddersfield Corporation wanted to impose a charge of 1d. per 1,000 gallons of water used for treating laundry effluent. However, the Federation backed the Huddersfield launderers in their protest against this and the case never reached court. A slightly different type of effluent case cropped up in 1911, when the City of London Corporation Bill included a clause under which all refuse from shops, depots, clubs, hotels, laundries and similar institutions, would be classed as trade refuse. On that occasion the Federation must have appeared in the light of a fairy godmother to the shops, depots, clubs and hotels of London, as well as to the laundries, for it got the clause dropped entirely.

In the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the first world war, some new problems appeared.

There was a protesting comment from the L.C.C., who said that there was no standard wage in laundries and that wages there were often too low. The Federation had to examine this. There was also a drive to get laundries scheduled under the Trade Board Act 1909. This was broached twice, in 1913 and 1914 and was foiled on both occasions, but only after a struggle. The trade unions also had suddenly awakened to the existence of the laundries and as a result of their attentions the industry was suffering from a rash of strikes. One at York was settled for terms of 12s. 0d. for a week of 56 hours for female workers of 21 years and more, and this was typical of settlements for other places too.

The start of war meant yet more new problems. Horses were extensively used for laundry van work and as they were commandeered for the army in great numbers transport difficulties arose in the industry. Petrol, oil and starch and other requisites became in short supply and there were considerable labour problems. The Federation did much to ease matters by making representations which resulted in the industry being recognised as of national importance.

Directly after the war, the wages question, which had had to wait for attention, came to the fore again. The Wages (Temporary

Regulation) Act 1918 was passed. Disputes henceforth could be referred to the Interim Council of Arbitration by the Minister of Labour if one party in the disagreement applied for this, regardless of the views of the other party. To the annoyance of the Federation, four wages cases in which it was involved were so referred. The results were more or less the same in each case, namely 28s. 0d. for a week of 48 hours for adult females. This method of settling disputes was unfair because it was only binding on federated laundries.

A change in the attitude of the Federation towards the establishment of a Trade Board took place at this time. The objection to this innovation, which the organisation had fought so hard against before the war, was withdrawn subject to certain conditions, including one that the Trade Board's decisions should be binding on all laundries, including those of an institutional character, and the Trade Board was duly established in 1919.

The Federation was growing in stature. The fact that its General Secretary was appointed in 1919 to a national committee to examine industrial unrest was a sign of its growing importance.

It has been necessary to describe the initial struggles of the Federation in some detail. The reason is that in those early days almost every move the young organisation made, almost every word it uttered, either substantially increased or substantially decreased its prestige. By the time of the reorganisation in 1920, however, the Federation had established itself and was acquiring the dignity which follows security—and maturity. It was beginning to broaden its scope and to undertake less controversial activities, many of them educational. It did not cease its protective activities; far from it. But it had found that there were additional functions which it was needed to perform. It was needed in such fields as education and training, study of production methods and public relations for the industry. Its development in these directions is described in later chapters.

CHAPTER IV

TRADE PROTECTION— FROM WAR TO WAR—AND BEYOND

One of the Federation's last activities before the reorganisation was of great importance. Fulham Borough Council tried to establish a municipal bagwash laundry and on behalf of a Fulham member, the Federation took the matter up. It was felt that the establishment of municipal rate-aided laundries would prejudice the interests of private firms. After a good deal of resistance from Fulham Borough Council, which actually tried to go on running the laundry after one injunction had been obtained against it, so that the case really had to be fought twice, the Federation prevailed. The laundry was closed. This effort on the part of the Federation was not only of immediate benefit to members, but it also established a precedent. A 1926 L.C.C. General Powers Bill tried to give power to all Metropolitan Boroughs to set up municipal laundries, but with its former success behind it, the Federation did not have great difficulty in getting this clause modified. The Federation was a firm champion of individual enterprise and would not tolerate this encroachment by the authorities into the rightful fields of private firms.

Although between the wars the Federation widened its scope on the educational side of the industry, it did not neglect other aspects. For example, the derating question which had been encountered in the days before the 1921 reorganisation, reappeared at intervals, in various forms. In 1931 the Inland Revenue protested against the retention of a laundry in Merthyr Tydfil on the special list. The Local Assessment Committee agreed with the Inland Revenue and the Federation felt itself obliged to move, it briefed counsel to conduct the laundry's case, and eventually the Recorder gave his judgment for the laundry.

Bureaucratic forces did not yield easily to the legitimate aspirations of the private launderer, however, and in 1932 the Local Assessment Committee informed the launderers of Cardiff that they had all been removed from the Special List. The Cardiff launderers, like their Merthyr relations at the other side of Glamorganshire, turned for help to the Federation which launched an appeal at once. The result was the

reversal of the Committee's decision and the replacement of Cardiff's laundries on the Special List.

In the years since 1933 the Federation has successfully resisted over 25 efforts on the part of the Inland Revenue to rob the laundries of the benefits of derating. No case has been lost. The last one, in 1960, the result of which was particularly gratifying, will be described in greater detail in a later section, dealing with victories of recent years.

The Second World war was calamitous for the laundry industry. The combination of an influx of work from the armed forces, inexperienced labour, and the disastrous shortage of staff and materials caused standards to fall and gravely damaged the image the public had of the laundry industry.

The Industry was fully supported by the Institution, of course. In the early days, when the laundries were almost denuded of key personnel, the Institution persuaded the Government to recognise the industry as essential, and to put the main groups of male employees on the list of reserved occupations. The Government was also persuaded to agree that laundries were eligible for inclusion under the Essential Work Order. With the aid of the Institution, an appropriate wage scale was agreed on, in excess of the Trade Board rate then holding.

One wartime move which the Institution saw was impracticable and managed to prevent was by the Board of Trade in 1941-42, when it was suggested that laundry work could be concentrated in a few selected laundries, beginning in the London area, and the rest closed down. This sounded more feasible than it actually was, by the Institution's efforts the Board of Trade was convinced that it could not succeed.

Indeed, so vital did the Government come to regard the laundry services, that an Inter-Departmental Committee was set up comprising representatives from all the services which would need the laundries, such as the armed forces and the hospitals, to ensure that essential needs were catered for. Arising from this the Directorate of Laundry Services was set up, with Sir Philip Warter as its Head. This in effect consisted of regional committees of representatives from the trade unions, the employees, the employers, and the services requiring laundrywork, the Central Office being in London, and the aim being to facilitate the performance of necessary services.

Laundry prices had been frozen by the Board of Trade Central Price Regulation Committee, but the Institution worked with the Directorate in helping the industry to cope with its labour situation, which was still critical. As a result of the V bombs, London laundries

found themselves in a very grave position indeed, 76 laundries being put completely out of action. Other industries were suffering in the same way, of course, and in six weeks 30,000 vacancies arose in the essential war industries. It was a difficult task which faced the Institution and the Directorate, that of urging the laundries' need for equal preference with the other trades. But a very large preference was obtained for the laundries, and some of those firms which had been put out of action were started again, also due to the efforts of the I.B.L. and the Directorate.

The industry was hampered in other ways besides that of labour shortage, of course. Almost every raw material it required, such as soap and starch and petrol, was strictly rationed. The Institution resisted the zoning of laundry transport to a one-van-per-area limit, but urged simultaneous collection and delivery as a means of saving petrol. Finally, zoning was only insisted on in Oxford. Meanwhile, the situation was rationalised as much as possible, by the exchange of laundry customers, so that long journeys could be to a large extent cut out. In the main, the laundries had sufficient petrol supplies to allow them to handle their essential work.

The wartime controls, of course, were a problem for the laundries. Soap for instance was rationed on the basis of what the laundry in question had purchased in a datum period. In practice this resulted in some laundries having far more than they required, and others having far too little. In the post-war period, before soap rationing ended, the Institution persuaded the Ministry of Food to let it try out a re-allocation scheme. This was run from the Institution, and contrary to the Ministry expectations, worked very well. It was discovered that there was just sufficient soap to go round, and those laundries who had originally had too much very public spiritedly surrendered their surplus for the use of the less fortunate.

The Institution also helped the industry to get coupons for protective clothing for laundryworkers, and, just after the war, extra bread coupons. There was also a Fuel Efficiency Committee to help laundries to manage on their allocations. The Institution managed to see that minimum needs were met.

The Institution also advised the Forces on the question of mobile laundry units, which did so much to protect the health of the Forces, especially in the Middle East, where, incidentally, the units operated under the greatest difficulties, because of the shortage of water.

The Army and the Royal Air Force appointed Laundry Technical

Officers, who were responsible for seeing that the work that had to be done was done, and the Institution's Staff collaborated with them in the placing of work.

The Institution's advice was also accepted by the Government on the question of depreciation allowances for laundry machinery. This was another great problem to the industry, for the machinery was worked at far higher pressure than in peacetime conditions.

With the end of the war and easing of restrictions, the laundries began the task of rebuilding the standards and reputation which the war had jeopardised. The Institution, as the name remained until 1955 when it was shortened to the Institute of British Launderers, helped the recovery as much as it was able. But it was not easy and the post-war progress of the laundry industry has not been free of pitfalls. The situation was not helped by such post-war upheavals as the electricity crisis of 1947, when owing to a serious fuel shortage, industry throughout the country was prohibited from using electricity from 9 a.m.-12 noon and from 2 p.m.-4 p.m. for a period of about three weeks. This, of course, would have hamstrung the laundries completely and the Institution made urgent pleas to the Prime Minister, the President of the Board of Trade and the Minister of Fuel and Power, for laundries to be classified as essential and consequently to function normally. As the climax to these concentrated efforts a letter was received from 10 Downing Street, dated 11th February, 1947, in the following terms:—

Dear Sir,

I write on behalf of the Prime Minister in reply to your telegram of the 8th February. As you will now be aware, it has been decided that electricity supplies will be maintained to laundries, which are regarded as essential services. I assume that in the circumstances you will not wish to pursue your request that Mr. Attlee should receive a deputation from the Institution of British Launderers.

Apart from laundries, only public utilities and some food concerns were granted similar concessions.

Similar representations had to be made nine years later, in 1956/7, when the Suez Crisis caused temporary petrol rationing, and the Institute had to fight (again successfully) for petrol priorities.

The authorities were usually ready to consider the laundry industry's point of view when reminded that it was there.

But it needed the Institute to keep on reminding them.



I.B.L. Headquarters, 16-17 Lancaster Gate, London, W.2.

CHAPTER V

EXPANDING INTERESTS

An entity which does not create is apt to stagnate and the Institute has always been creative. From its earliest days it was given to producing new ideas and new services for its members—offspring as it were—a sign of its vitality.

One of the earliest of these was the Launderers Mutual Insurance Co. which was developed from an event in 1900 when Mr. James W. Hayes, whose insurance had been placed for a decade past with a firm called Noble & Co., suggested that they be made official advisers to members. The ultimate result was that in 1908 this firm, which by then had become Noble & Wilkins, brought before the Laundry Association a scheme for Mutual Insurance, which was explained in detail at the monthly meeting of the Association in December 1908, in the Throne Room of Holborn Restaurant. The Mutual would function for members of the Laundry Association or of a federated association in the country, and would endeavour to insure all aspects of the industry. "Everything except life", was the way one enthusiast described its functions!

The scheme was implemented and a portfolio of laundry business which Noble & Wilkins had was transferred to the Launderers Mutual. The first policy was issued in April 1909 and the successful flotation of the company was announced by Mr. Hugh Trenchard at a council meeting in May 1909. Mr. Trenchard was made a member of the Board of Directors and A. H. Noble and Martyn Wilkins were made Joint Managing Directors. In the first annual report of the company covering only eight months, a premium income was shown of £2,980.

Continuity has been a noticeable feature of this company, for H. C. Martyn Wilkins, one of the founders, continued as Managing Director till his death in 1951, a record of over 40 years' service and the work is being carried on by the sons of the founders, Messrs. Gordon A. Noble and W. G. Martyn Wilkins.

TEXTILES

The formation of the Fabrics Investigation Committee was another early sign of the extension of the Institute's activities. Its purpose was to assist launderers who were in difficulty and to help end the habit which manufacturers of faulty textiles had, of blaming it on to the laundry if their products failed to survive washing. The laundries were naturally tired of being the scapegoat every time, and a Committee was formed during the First World War, the first scheme for it being drafted in 1915. The members of the first Committee were Messrs. J. R. Peers, F. W. Belleini, A. R. Frost and C. Marshall.

Arrangements were made for the committee to meet once weekly and since those days it has continued its work with few interruptions, although the interval between meetings is now a fortnight. Each member of the Institute is invited to submit articles for impartial examination and report, and this service is given free on the first five articles submitted by any member in each year. Most textile organisations recognise its reports as authoritative. The Institute is now engaged in the business of inducing textile manufacturers to label goods which require special or extra careful washing treatment as many already do, particularly in these days of man-made fibres, which react in all sorts of strange ways to being pressed at too high a temperature or boiled. Permanently pleated skirts reduced to the consistency of corrugated cardboard, and men's jerseys shrunk to a size which would be too small for a child of six, are the type of thing frequently received by the Fabrics Investigation Committee nowadays, and lack of a warning label is often the cause.

Another Institute Committee which examines textiles problems such as shrink resistant processes and the properties of certain dyes is the Textiles and Materials Committee. As well as the B.L.R.A. and the Association of Women Launderers, a variety of interests is represented, including (among others) the Retail Trading Standards Association, the National Federation of Dyers and Cleaners, the International Wool Secretariat, the Cotton Board, the British Man-Made Fibres Federation and the National Council of Women.

On noting that the Consumer Protection Committee under the Chairmanship of Mr. J. T. Molony, Q.C., was seeking evidence, inter alia, on "the construction, wearing quality and (where appropriate) shrink resistance and colour fastness of textiles (particularly clothing, curtain fabrics, and upholstery materials), carpets, and the adequacy of washing or cleaning instructions with clothing and textiles . . ." the Institute

prepared a Memorandum in Spring 1960 covering these points. This memorandum expressed the Institute's opinion that simple laundering instructions should be attached to textile goods, and that the actual code used was of less importance than that it should be perfectly clear. At about the same time a second Memorandum was produced, dealing with the laundry and its customer, and in early autumn of the same year, by a further Memorandum containing supplementary evidence. In Spring 1961 oral evidence was given to the Consumer Protection Committee.

The question of shrinkage in particular exercised the Institute for many years. During the immediate post-war years there had been a number of complaints from users of overalls made from pre-shrunk materials, to the effect that these materials were still shrinking badly in the wash. Manufacturers repeatedly put the onus on the laundries, and the launderers were growing restive. Following representations to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, a meeting of representatives of interested parties was held on 14th September 1953 and the meeting asked the Shirley Institute to conduct an independent investigation. The result of this was "A Survey and Investigation of the Shrinkage in use of Boiler Suits made from Pre-shrunk Drills and Denims", which came out in 1957, under the auspices of the British Cotton Industry Research Association. This enquiry opened up such vistas for yet further enquiry that the associations involved decided to co-operate in further research to find out how shrinkage problems could be overcome. There were fourteen bodies concerned, including the Institute and the B.L.R.A., and their report on Shrinkage—A Survey of Shrinkage Problems and their Solutions with Special Reference to Industrial Overalls, was issued in August 1959.

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

In 1916 the Government had formed the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, an aim of which was to encourage British industries to form their own Research Associations, with assistance from government funds. The Federation responded to this offer, with an application to form a research association. The D.S.I.R. offered the laundries £1 per £1 subscribed by laundries, up to a maximum of £5,000 per annum, provided that a minimum of £2,500 per year could be guaranteed for a five year period.

The B.L.R.A. was registered as a limited company on 23rd July, 1920, with an initial subscription rate of 2s. 0d. per worker. Its

founders were a small group of pioneers, chief among whom were Mr. J. J. Stark, and Mr. D. E. Benson of Southport, but they were not backed by the industry at large. The minimum guaranteed subscription was reached in that first year only through their tireless efforts at propaganda and their determination.

The training classes quickly spread to the provinces. They covered subjects such as engineering, staff training, advertising (which was a correspondence course), Government regulations, practical chemistry (which was held at Manchester and Leicester) and washhouse procedure. One of the most popular courses was the one on staff training which produced such a response that the Federation also offered its members a correspondence course in this subject. The size of the various classes varied between 10 and 33 except for the washhouse class which got away to a flying start with 70 members on its books.

As the educational side of the Federation seemed to be expanding, steps were taken to ensure the efficiency of the training given. In 1930 a conference of lecturers was held in London, as many of the lecturers in chemistry at the classes held in provincial technical colleges were not conversant with the problems of the laundry industry, nor with the particular application of their subject to the industry. The lecturers were given a few days of intensive training in September 1930 and again in April 1931 and the event became an annual one. Members of the B.L.R.A. staff at Hendon Laboratory lectured the lecturers and visits to laundries were included in this pocket syllabus.

For the next eight years, till 1938, the eve of the Second World War, Laundry Technology classes were held regularly at a great number of places all over the country, and from 1934-8 National Examinations were held annually, with medals of gold, silver and bronze as awards and National Certificates.

Annual Scholarships were instituted in 1933 when Viscount Leverhulme offered the Federation an annual scholarship of £120 per annum for three years, to be tenable at any approved British University and for the purpose of enabling the student to take the B.Sc. degree, with chemistry as a compulsory subject.

There was of course the problem of young men who were eager to improve their knowledge and qualifications but could simply not spare three years of their time for this. The British Launderers' Research Association was well established at this time and agreed to take four students for an intensive course from 1st April to 30th June each year.

The Federation paid the fees to the B.L.R.A. and made a cash allowance of £25 per student. This system began working in 1934.

There was still a gap, however. The three year course and the three months' course represented two extremes and there was nothing in between. In an attempt to bridge this gulf a special composite course was arranged, tenable at any approved Technical College, but after a two year trial it was altered in 1937 to six months at the B.L.R.A. Laboratories for an extension of the three months' intensive course in laundry technology, to be followed by three months at what was now the Institution's head office, studying costing, production methods and other theoretical aspects of the industry.

After the Second World War, in 1946, the Laundry Industry Education Board was formed, and for many years worked to secure a co-ordinated educational policy, but was dissolved in May 1959 to be replaced by the I.B.L. Education Committee, on which the B.L.R.A., the Association of Women Launderers, the Co-operative Laundry Trade Association, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, and the Association of Technical Institutions, are all represented. The Laundry Industry Education Trust Fund, however, which was set up by the Education Board, continues to function independently and to seek donations to provide scholarships, and is also now responsible for the selection of candidates for awards.

PUBLICITY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The history of Publicity in the industry has been long and varied.

One action in this field which the Federation took just before it was reconstituted was the result of a talk on Collective Advertising which was given to members at Buxton. Several Sections were interested by this and the Royal Counties Section produced a series of educational articles in local papers, designed to acquaint the public more with the laundry industry. In October 1921 the Federation issued a series of pamphlets for laundry customers. The reception of these was somewhat mixed. As far as education was concerned, the Federation was to discover that the public needed it just as much as the rising young laundry executives.

The first attempt at collective publicity took place in 1922, when space was taken at the "Daily Express" Women's Exhibition at Olympia, London, that July for a working exhibit of a Modern Laundry. During the exhibition a film was taken showing the laundry at work, the public interest in which was described by the chronicler of

those times as "remarkable". This film was shown in centres as far apart as Aberdeen and Ilfracombe and its success led to the preparation of a cartoon film which was shown for an aggregate period of 167 weeks in many large towns.

In 1928, a Publicity Department was set up under Mr. Cyril C. Freer who was responsible for the preparation of a Slogan Competition which was supported by 726 members and, in connection with which over 4½ million leaflets and posters were distributed. The competition attracted nearly 30,000 entries. The slogan which won the first prize of £100 was "Let the Laundry do it all".

Later an attempt to raise £25,000 per annum for a three year Publicity Campaign was a failure but there followed a number of District Campaigns.

After the war, the industry found itself with an acute staff shortage, and a great recruitment drive was necessary. It was decided, therefore, to appoint the London Press Exchange to conduct Public Relations on behalf of the Industry. This resulted in the Lorna Campaign in the Women's Journals and National and Provincial press designed to build prestige and to attract workers. An offshoot of the campaign was the Lorna Competition to find the most efficient and attractive laundress.

Each laundry selected its own Lorna, who then entered for the Section Competition. The winner of this entered for the District Competition, and the District winner went on to the Final. Entrants were chosen for their qualifications as laundresses, sense of responsibility and powers of leadership, and initiative. Miss Felicity Attlee, daughter of the then Prime Minister, presented the prizes at the first competition. A good deal of very favourable publicity was obtained for the industry through these competitions.

All this led to the foundation of the Institute's own Public Relations Department in 1951 with the task of building up an attractive image of the Laundry Industry in the eyes of its customers and potential laundry workers. For this purpose, leaflets, photographs and film strips and material for editorial news stories and talks are produced for both Press and Public.

Talks to schools and women's organisations are also given by this department, while visits to laundries by schools, women's clubs, members of the press and the public, are arranged upon request. The department also assists members at Careers Exhibitions and trade fairs by the loaning of display material and the provision of advisory services.

In 1960, to provide a means for members who wished to do so to take a more active part in publicity, and were prepared to finance it, the Institute established the Launderers Publicity Association, later to change its name to the Guild of Professional Launderers and Cleaners.

SURVEYS AND TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENTS

In 1934, the need for an investigation into production methods became apparent and in November that year, Mr. H. G. Maule, B.A., an Industrialist Psychologist, was engaged to make a scientific study of laundry methods. Dr. Maule, as he later became, was succeeded by Miss Mary Mellis but the Second World War intervened and the work was suspended.

Nevertheless, the interest had been created and a Production Department was established in 1947. This Department is divided into the Installation, Development, Follow-up and Methods Study sections. Since 1947, the Installation Section has installed the Institute's Production Control and Incentive Bonus Scheme in more than 100 laundries, and also in many drycleaning departments attached to laundries. The Development Section, which was started somewhat later, prepares reports for the Industry on aspects of Production Methods. Its first report was on Racking and sub-Racking. Others include Sheet Folding, Preparation and Feeding of Sheets, Shirt Finishing, Laundry Productivity and the widely commended Collection and Delivery report which had an important influence on van design (in collaboration with the B.L.R.A.).

The Follow-up Section was begun in 1956. Its aim is to enable those laundries in which the Production Control & Incentive Bonus Scheme has been installed, to maintain the system without employing special staff for the purpose. The Methods Study Section is the latest development. Its purpose is to introduce better methods without the need to employ incentives and production control. The members of the Institute who have taken advantage of the services offered by the Production & Methods Study Department, have found them valuable. The department has been among the most important developments of the Institute.

Allied to it is the Technical Advice and Valuation Department which is available to advise members. Its services cover surveys and investigations into all technical aspects of the laundry. It has carried out many investigations on boiler plant, covering smoke and grit emission, repair difficulties, and on oil fuel conversion, advising on the

selection of suitable plant, the siting of tanks, and the vetting of contractors' specifications and estimates.

It has also examined questions of conversion to electric power, and advised on the layout of plant, often with a great saving to the firm concerned. The Technical Advice and Valuations Department offers unbiased advice to all members, at moderate fees.

For a moderate fee likewise, the Institute's Costing Department will install a uniform Costing System to suit the conditions of the individual laundry. These systems have proved of considerable value to many members of the Institute, as also have the booklets which the Department has produced to meet the needs of the Industry.

One of the Institution's most sizeable undertakings after the war was the Commission of Enquiry, set up in September 1950 to enquire into the whole business of commercial laundering, with an outline embracing all its aspects, productivity, the labour force, laundry services, and finance. The Commission, consisting of ten members under the Chairmanship of Mr. W. R. Scott, M.B.E., M.I.E.E., of A. Bell & Sons Ltd., brought out its report in September 1952. This was a most comprehensive document running to 176 pages, which has been of very great value to the industry, and one of its more ambitious undertakings.

Another survey by the Institute was on management recruitment. A Committee was set up by the National Council on 8th December 1955 to investigate the problems confronting the industry in its endeavour to attract the right type of young man and woman for future managerial positions. The Committee of eight members made a report to the National Council which covered the function of management, its structure and salaries, training facilities, recruitment difficulties and remedies, together with some general observations and recommendations and a summary of its findings.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

A post-war development with which the Institution was connected was the formation of the International Laundry Association which, following suggestions put forward by Mr. D. K. Rollit, the then General Secretary, was eventually inaugurated at Olympia on 29th September 1950, with eight member countries and others in prospect. The Institution drafted the Constitution for this Association, and provided hospitality for the overseas representatives attending the inaugural meeting.

An important aspect of the Institute's development is its Young

Launderers' Movement, which was started in 1924 in the form of a Congress of Junior Executives, held at the Royal Hotel, Matlock Bath, early in that year.

This Junior Congress was so successful that a similar meeting was arranged six months later. After this second venture, it was decided to exclude the senior members apart from the President, Chairman of the National Executive Committee and the Hon. Treasurer.

Towards the end of 1924, a wish was expressed for more frequent meetings and a London Group was formed. This was the forerunner of other local groups of which there are now five: London, Midland, North Western, North Eastern and South Western.

In 1929, an age limit was introduced and on 1st January, 1937, the Young Launderers became an integral part of the Institute.

The Conferences continued to be held annually, with some exceptions. The war interrupted progress but afterwards, the local groups were re-formed. Latterly, the larger groups have taken it in turns to organise a mid-year conference.

There are few such Junior Movements in the country and it is a potential source of strength in the future.

The social side of the industry was not neglected. In 1924 the Laundry Industry Sports Club was founded for the purpose of developing the social amenities of laundrywork. One of the great annual Sports Events it sponsored was the Annual Athletics Meeting for laundry employees. Some of these meetings attracted as many as 1,000 competitors and 5,000 spectators.

The Swimming Gala, which was instituted during the 1920's but has now also been discontinued, was extremely popular in its day, and tickets were sold out on nearly every occasion. Another very popular activity was the Sunday Football League, which had two divisions, and was always well supported.

The Club today covers a wide range of sporting activities, including tennis, golf, squash, cricket, rugby football, bowls and motoring, and a number of valuable trophies are competed for annually.

The custom of holding section dances for laundry employees began shortly before the war, as a result of a very successful combined dance held for laundryworkers in the Acton area. Following this, many other London Sections held similar dances, and Santos Casani, the well known competition dancer was invited to judge a dancing competition open to laundry employees in the London area. One partner in each couple had to be a laundry employee.

This competition was very well supported and became an annual event. The final of the first one was held at the Royal Opera House at Covent Garden, and the winners, Mr. Wally Fryer and Miss Violet Barnes, head packer at White Line Laundry in Blackheath, afterwards became British Professional Champions for four years in succession.

Production and dissemination of literature, for the information and assistance both of the members and the public, is yet another side of the Institute's work. For the members, there is a monthly journal and an annual Reference Book, which are issued free of charge, and as well as this, Bulletins go out from time to time to impart urgent information to members. A library of books covering technical and managerial subjects is also provided, from which members may borrow free of charge.

A recent development is the formation of Special Interest Groups of Members as for example, that for Services and Hospital Contracts, with the object of providing a forum for discussion and where appropriate, to enable action to be taken on particular matters of common interest on their behalf.

The final chapter of the I.B.L. Story is devoted to an account of the most successful of recent cases featuring the work of the Institute's Legal Department.

CHAPTER VI

RECENT VICTORIES

There are some struggles which have been fought again and again by the Institute, but which keep on renewing themselves. De-rating is one of these, and Effluent is another.

The de-rating of industry was introduced in the late 'twenties primarily to relieve the depressed industries. Industrial premises were rated at 25% of the normal rateable value or to put the situation the other way round, industry secured the benefit of a 75% reduction in the rates as compared with non-industrial premises. This concession to industry was recently reduced to 50% and is expected to be withdrawn entirely in 1963.

The actual definition of industrial premises is very complicated, but for the purpose of laundries can be summarised as a factory or workshop (as defined by the Factory & Workshop Acts 1901-1920, which included laundries) provided that it is not primarily occupied and used, *inter alia*, for the purposes of a retail shop, the latter being defined as including premises of a similar character where retail trade or business (including repairs) is carried out.

However, in spite of the Factory & Workshop Act, a number of rating authorities refused to believe that this definition was intended to cover laundries, on the grounds that they manufactured nothing. It was not until a case had been taken by the Institute to Quarter Sessions that the right of laundries to de-rating was established. There the matter rested for some time.

Meanwhile a series of cases in other industries were building up a somewhat artificial definition which appeared to convert into a shop—at least for rating purposes—any factory which had a shop on the premises, and sold goods or services retail to the public, provided that it could be said that the bulk of the factory production was also sold retail to the public in one form or another.

The result of this was that a rather surrealistic picture of a retail shop was painted in the minds of the Inland Revenue who in 1958 decided to appeal against the Local Valuation Court's decision to

allow de-rating to the Heathfield Laundry. It was learned that the Inland Revenue were intending to treat this as a test case for laundries.

The Heathfield Laundry had no department which in ordinary language could be called a shop but the office had a hatch to which customers came when they wished to collect their clean laundry, which was kept on a rack in the office. Dirty linen was deposited in a basket in the yard. There was no invitation to call but the name of the laundry was displayed on a board at the entrance. The work received in this way amounted to 18% of the total turnover. This last point was pounced upon by the Inland Revenue, who decided after a case in 1937 involving the Ritz Cleaners, that where more than 5% of a cleaners' or laundry's turnover was handled in this way, it should be classified as a retail business.

Counsel, however, considered that this point was more than balanced by the lack either of any invitation to call or of any of the physical characteristics of a shop, and he thought that the Institute should support the laundry if it could conduct the case in its own way.

So the Institute went into the lists, the case was heard on 25th July 1959 and the Tribunal gave its decision in September. This went against the laundry, but the Tribunal made it clear that it had felt bound in law by the 1937 case to find that there was a shop on the premises, and that the shop aspect was primary. However, the actual facts were meticulously set out so that a higher Court would have no difficulty in altering the decision if it so wished. Counsel strongly recommended an appeal and his advice was taken.

Meanwhile, it was learnt that the Fakenham Steam Laundry had appealed to the Lands Tribunal against a decision by the Local Valuation Court depriving it of de-rating benefits. Here the laundry's case was even stronger than that at Heathfield, since only 8% of the turnover was received on the premises and nothing was provided for the reception of the work which was merely thrown into a corner of the despatch room. To collect work, customers had to attract the attention of any member of the staff who happened to be near and would undertake to issue the work and take the money.

Counsel considered that this case strengthened the Heathfield one and the Institute therefore supported the appeal. Once again the Tribunal found against the laundry, but this was not surprising in view of its previous decision and the way was now open for the Heathfield and Fakenham cases to be heard together, by the Court of Appeal.

The two cases came up for hearing before the Master of the Rolls, Lord Evershed, Lord Justice Harman and Lord Justice Donovan on Friday, 21st October and continued until the 27th October, when the decision was given—in favour of the laundries. The Court found unanimously not only that neither laundry had anything in the nature of a shop (which was itself sufficient to dispose of the matter) but went still further and said that even if there were a shop, by no stretch of imagination could it be said in these cases that the rest of the factory work passed through the shop or that the shop was therefore the primary purpose of the establishment.

The Inland Revenue was given leave to appeal to the House of Lords but did not choose to do so. The fact that the Government has decided to abolish de-rating in 1963 will, unfortunately, cut short the launderers' established rights, but in any event, a principle has been upheld, and this may perhaps be of value some time in the future.

The effluent difficulties are equally long-standing. In 1937 an attempt to persuade the government to define laundry effluent as domestic effluent was unsuccessful. Laundries were however excepted from the need to obtain local authorities' consent to discharge their effluent, and from being required to pay. This situation held until after the war, when the authorities grew restive. In Scotland, where the law had not been consolidated on this subject, things reached the stage where the Hill Watson Committee was set up to examine the matter. The Institute gave evidence and the Committee agreed that laundries should have to pay little if anything for discharge, although it did not agree that laundries should have automatic exemption.

Shortly after this the Armer Committee was set up to examine the effluent question in England and Wales. The Institute again made representations, these dealing specifically with the arguments of the Hill Watson Committee, and when the Armer Committee reported in 1960 it accepted that laundries did not generally increase the burden on sewage disposal. It recommended that there should be provision for withdrawal of exemption in special cases, but the laundries came out well on the whole, and the recommendations of the Armer Committee are embodied in the Public Health Act 1961 (Section 65).

There was one final skirmish—final so far, that is—when the L.C.C., which has separate legislation in these matters, promoted a Private Bill in November 1961 to give itself power to charge laundries for effluent. It was the Institute, with the weight of its recent successes behind it, that managed to prevent this from going through, and per-

sueded the L.C.C. to be content for London laundries to be in the same position as laundries elsewhere in the country.

These, then, were the two biggest victories in recent years. But there were others. There were, for instance, the three or four laundries taken to compulsory arbitration just after the war, over wages. The Institute represented the laundries, and the industry emerged successful.

In the post-war years there was an increase in administrative orders affecting all branches of the industry, such as road transport regulations, clean air, water charges and so forth. The Institute made it its business to keep members informed of proposed Orders, running into hundreds every year, so that objections could be put forward in good time.

An example of the type of legislation which required action by the Institute was the Bill requiring industrial buildings to be treated for thermal insulation. Launderers felt that in their industry this was unnecessary, and pointed this out. Exemption was obtained for those parts of the laundry plant where the process provided adequate heat.

The menace of the municipal laundry reappeared after the war, too. Three local authorities, Dudley Corporation, West Riding County Council, and the L.C.C. tried to obtain power to run municipal laundries, but in each case the Institute got the clause withdrawn. In 1945, Manchester Corporation promoted a Bill allowing them to provide a collection and delivery service for their public washhouses. The Institute obtained an amendment requiring this to be self-supporting, which very soon resulted in the charge increasing from 6d. to 1s. 3d. and it is now understood that the service is running at a loss. Other corporations which have obtained similar powers have mostly not used them. In 1949 came a Bill empowering local authorities to provide laundry services for housing estates. The efforts of the Institute resulted in local authorities being circularised requiring that such services be self-supporting (although this was not incorporated in the Bill), and pointing out the possibility of using local commercial laundries services for the estates. As far as is known, no local authorities have made use of the powers given in this Bill.

Every one of the victories gained by the Institute has a significance greater than its immediate effect, for it means the setting of another precedent, the making of a foundation on which future cases may be built.

The Institute is not a concern given to dealing with the past and present only.

It builds for the future.

THE INSTITUTE OF BRITISH LAUNDERERS LIMITED.

Presidents and Honorary Treasurers since Incorporation, 1920.

Presidents

W. Bird, J.P.	1920-1922	P. Whittle	1942-1943
G. D. Densham, J.P.	1922-1923	J. Benson Barrow	1943-1944
J. K. Fairlie, J.P.	1923-1924	Joseph Riley	1944-1945
J. Abey	1924-1925	H. Russell	1945-1946
T. Taylor	1925-1926	J. C. Templeton	1946-1947
R. R. Lister	1926-1927	A. P. Mieras	1947-1948
C. H. Brown	1927-1928	T. D. Reeve	1948-1949
E. Jackson	1928-1929	F. Woodhouse	1949-1950
D. Elson	1929-1930	W. J. Gray	1950-1951
J. P. Mitchell	1930-1931	T. D. Brotherstone	1951-1952
G. Bentley	1931-1932	Miss Joyce Marsh	1952-1953
W. Crabtree	1932-1933	H. G. Payne, J.P.	1953-1954
T. Boyd	1933-1934	I. R. Brown	1954-1955
E. Hawkes	1934-1935	J. R. Malcomson	1955-1956
C. R. J. Roberts	1935-1936	L. E. Brown	1956-1957
S. Bell	1936-1937	J. P. Harland	1957-1958
W. H. Close, M.C.	1937-1938	Cedric E. Fry	1958-1959
L. E. Nicholls	1938-1939	K. E. Garcke	1959-1960
Mrs. R. K. Ross	1939-1940	A. R. L. Oliver	1960-1961
K. H. Cunliffe	1940-1942	I. H. Paterson	1961-1962

George D. Mieras, B.E.M. 1962-

Honorary Treasurers

E. Jackson	1920-1927
T. A. Macfarlane	1927-1932
T. Taylor	1932-1941
F. Channon	1941-1946
W. H. Markham	1946-1953
T. D. Reeve	1953-

Price 1/6d.